

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 1341

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GB, EK

SUBJ: PRESIDENT BONGO'S COMMENTS ON EQUATORIAL GUINEA

1. DURING A PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT BONGO
OCTOBER 29, I ASKED THE PRESIDENT WHETHER THE VARIOUS
BORDER PROBLEMS WITH EQUATORIAL GUINEA HAD BEEN SATISFACTORILY
RESOLVED.

2. BONGO REPLIED THAT WITH REGARD TO THE EASTERN LAND BORDER
OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA, THE BORDER PROBLEMS HAD BEEN RESOLVED
AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSIONS AND THAT IN EFFECT GABON
HAD MADE ALL THE CONCESSIONS. IN TWO DIFFERENT AREAS,
BONGO SAID THAT HE HAD AGREED TO ADJUSTMENTS WHICH ALLOWED
SMALL ENCROACHMENTS BY EQUATORIAL GUINEA INTO GABON AND
HE EXPLAINED THAT THE REASON HE HAD DONE THIS WAS THAT,
WHILE THESE AREAS WERE GABONESE, MOST OF THE POPULATION
WAS EQUATORIAL GUINEAN AND IN ANY CASE BONGO WISHED TO
MAKE A GESTURE OF FRIENDSHIP TOWARD MACIAS.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE OCEAN DEMARCATION LINE BETWEEN THE TWO
COUNTRIES, DISCUSSIONS HAD LED TO A GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH
WHICH THE GABONESE WERE SATISFIED BUT WHICH APPARENTLY
WAS NOT COMPLETELY FINALIZED. BONGO SAID THAT MACIAS
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HAD GIVEN UP HIS CLAIM TO M'BAGNE BUT THERE STILL SEEMED

TO BE SOME DIFFERENCE OF OPINION CONCERNING THE ACTUAL BORDER BETWEEN THE ISLANDS. BONGO ADDED THAT HE HAD OFFERED A SUM OF MONEY (UNSPECIFIED) TO MACIAS BECAUSE OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA'S FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES AND ALSO, (PRESUMABLY) TO FACILITATE THE NEGOTIATIONS. SUBSEQUENT TO THESE MEETINGS, AN EQUATORIAL GUINEAN DELEGATION HAD COME TO LIBREVILLE WITH A DOCUMENT THAT DIFFERED SOMEWHAT FROM WHAT THE GABONESE HAD UNDERSTOOD HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY AGREED AND WHICH REFERRED TO "INDEMNIFICATION" BY THE GABONESE FOR CERTAIN EQUATORIAL GUINEAN CONCESSIONS. BONGO SAID THAT HE TOTALLY REJECTED THIS AND WAS INCENSED AT THE REFERENCE TO "INDEMNIFICATION" INASMUCH AS HE SAID THAT HIS OWN OFFER HAD BEEN A PURELY GENEROUS ONE ON HIS PART AND THAT HE DID NOT FEEL THAT GABON WAS IN ANY WAY OBLIGED TO INDEMNIFY EQUATORIAL GUINEA FOR ANYTHING.

4. COMMENT: GABON AND EQUATORIAL GUINEA SEEM TO BE MOVING SLOWLY TOWARD A RESOLUTION OF THEIR BORDER PROBLEMS AND IT IS CLEAR THAT BONGO MADE CONCESSIONS ON THE LAND FRONTIER IN HOPES OF GETTING A BETTER DEAL ON THE OCEAN BORDER. IT IS ALSO APPARENT THAT THE LATTER PROBLEM IS NOT YET COMPLETELY RESOLVED ALTHOUGH IT WOULD SEEM THAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE AND THAT SOME COMPROMISE WILL EVENTUALLY BE REACHED.
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